Always Causing Legal Unrest / Pushing Buttons

Complete Surviving Catalog Pages, 1991-1993

ACLU-02 - Political Button Archive

The catalogs are not a miscellaneous collection of slogans. Together they form a portable radical feminist publication and a map of the political arguments circulating through the campaign.

Buttons as Publication

The surviving catalog pages document approximately eighty political buttons produced or distributed through the Always Causing Legal Unrest / Pushing Buttons campaign during its 1991-1993 catalog phase. The buttons were sold through women's bookstores and independent booksellers across the United States and continued to circulate in bookstores for years after the December 1991 Bill of Rights Day action.

A button condenses an argument into a phrase, a symbol, and a body that carries it. These designs address pornography, rape, incest, femicide, battering, abortion, sexual harassment, objectification, self-defense, women's anger, and the authority of patriarchal institutions. Some use humor; some quote feminist writers; some invoke force; some reverse familiar threats; many refuse the expectation that women make resistance reassuring.

The project also used the buttons as a reversal of institutional speech. The American Civil Liberties Union enabled pornographers to make claims about women and women's sexuality, including claims that women wanted or enjoyed violence. Pushing Buttons put feminist ideas and words into the mouth of the other ACLU so that the institution could experience what it meant to have someone else define its identity and speak in its name.

The "ACLU Marketplace"

The order page presents an "ACLU Marketplace," a direct parody of the civil-libertarian "marketplace of ideas." In the marketplace imagined by legal doctrine, competing speech is expected to correct bad speech. The campaign made the abstraction literal. Feminist speech was manufactured as an object, assigned a price, circulated by mail, displayed in bookstores, and worn in public.

The parody became especially sharp in 1991, when the American Civil Liberties Union threatened legal action over the acronym while the feminist ACLU was openly selling its arguments. The organization that celebrated a marketplace of ideas confronted a marketplace it did not control.

A Collective Political Vocabulary

The catalogs combine original slogans, movement phrases, quotations, and designs connected with related feminist work. They include buttons associated with Andrea Dworkin, Audre Lorde, Emma Goldman, feminist anti-violence organizing, abortion rights, anti-pornography campaigns, and women's self-defense. The archive should not treat every phrase as though it originated with one person. Its historical value lies in the assembled vocabulary and in the network through which that vocabulary traveled.

The range is striking. "Pornography Violates My Civil Rights" sits beside "Your Silence Will Not Protect You." "Rape: Male Entertainment for Men" appears near "Sex Harassment Is a Hate Crime." Other designs include "If Voting Could Change the System It Wouldn't Be Legal," "How Dare You Assume I'm Non-Violent?," "Women! Bite the Hand That Feeds, Leads, Bleeds You," and the recurring "Dead Men Don't…" series. The catalog records a movement arguing internally and externally about violence, resistance, speech, sexuality, and survival.

The Catalog as Historical Evidence

Catalogs are often discarded because they look commercial and temporary. Here, the commercial form is part of the political history. Prices, order boxes, handling charges, address lines, and product grids show how feminist graphics moved through an alternative economy. The pages document not just what was said, but how the speech was reproduced and sustained.

The catalog images also preserve the design environment of early web and mail-order activism. The header “the aclu / Hate Speech Sold Here” and the phrase “pushing the limits of free speech to even the score” connect the button inventory to the wider conflict over the acronym. The pages bring together paper catalog, website ordering, button photography, and political parody.

Date and Origin

The catalog identifies the Pushing Buttons phase as beginning in 1991. Always Causing Legal Unrest itself began earlier, in Santa Cruz in the early 1980s. The surviving catalog dates end in 1993, but the buttons continued to be sold in bookstores across the United States for years afterward.

Content Note

The catalog includes confrontational slogans concerning rape, pornography, femicide, weapons, violence, and women’s resistance. Some designs contain provocative or threatening language characteristic of radical feminist political graphics of the period. They are preserved as historical primary sources and should be interpreted in context.

Source and Provenance Note

Three original photographs supplied in 2026: one printed order form/catalog sheet and two photographs of an extended website catalog display. An older Internet Archive webpage capture described the set as a complete catalog of approximately eighty buttons sold nationally through women’s bookstores and independent booksellers during 1991-1993.

Primary-Source Images

ACLU-02a - Printed order form and catalog page.

the aclu
Hate Speech Sold Here
PUSHING BUTTONS
pushing the limits of free speech to even the score
(Since 1991.)
CLICK HERE TO ORDER BUTTONS
LEARN TO BURN
Flags Don't Burn By Themselves They Need Your Help
A.C.L.U.
NO MEANS NO
MOTHER FUCKER
Status quo
KILLER FEMINIST FROM HELL
CASTRATE RAPISTS
IN CASE OF EMERGENCY BREAK BUTTON
BATTERY
RAPE
STOP
INCEST
FEMICIDE
FEMICIDE
STOP
KILLING WOMEN
PORNOGRAPHY
PORNOGRAPHY
THE BEST WAY TO A MAN'S HEART IS THROUGH HIS CHEST
Dworkinista
DWORKINITE
A.C.L.U.
What I am saying is that everyone of us has the responsibility to be the woman that Marc Lepine wanted to murder.
We have to be the women who stand between men and the women they want to hurt.
whatever intercourse is, it is not freedom; and if it cannot exist without objectification, it will never be.
Andrea Dworkin
Feminism requires precisely what misogyny destroys in women; unimpeachable bravery in confronting male power.
Feminism exists so that no woman ever has to face her oppressor in a vacuum, alone.
KNOW THE BASTARD ON TOP OF YOU.
I'M A FEMINIST
(Not the fun kind)
if questions make the holy penis unhappy, who could survive what answers might do?
PORNOGRAPHY VIOLATES MY CIVIL RIGHTS
PORNOGRAPHY IS CENSORSHIP
ANTI-PORN TEARERIST
I'd Rather Be Destroying Pornography
A.C.L.U.
ALWAYS ENSURING LEGAL DISSENT
BUT I WANNA BE PART OF THE PROBLEM.
Women Unite!
TAKE BACK THE FIGHT
RAPE
Entertainment For Men
SEX HARASSMENT IS A HATE CRIME
IF VOTING COULD CHANGE THE SYSTEM, IT WOULDN'T BE LEGAL.
FEMININE PROTECTION
HOW DARE YOU ASSUME I'M NON-VIOLENT?
PROTECT OUR COMMUNITY
MEN DON'T TAKE US SERIOUSLY BECAUSE THEY'RE NOT PHYSICALLY AFRAID OF US.
BAG SPERM - NOT WOMEN
NO CHOICE
ABORTION IS HEALTHCARE HEALTHCARE IS A RIGHT
ABUSE OF POWER COMES AS NO SURPRISE
THINK
MEAN

ACLU-02b - Website catalog, upper section.

Heterosexually Impaired
Dismember Male Imperialism!
PROTECTED BY THELMA & LOUISE
5,000 YEARS OF SEXISM ARE WE BORED YET?
BONDAGE IS NOT LIBERATION
Men and Women Were Created Equal and Smith and Wesson Make Damn Sure It Stays That Way.
MITCHELL BROTHERS 1 DOWN 1 TO GO
There is danger in fighting. There is also danger in NOT fighting.
PATRIARCHY PROSTITUTION PORNOGRAPHY
BATTERERS BEWARE
REAL WOMEN DON'T WHINE
If you don't stand for SOMETHING you'll fall for ANYTHING
TALK TO MY LAWYER
I THINK THEREFORE I AM DANGEROUS
WHEN JUSTICE IS GONE THERE'S ALWAYS FORCE
A PORN STORE
YOUR SILENCE WILL NOT PROTECT YOU
THE HOTTEST PLACES IN HELL ARE RESERVED FOR THOSE WHO IN TIMES OF GREAT MORAL CRISIS MAINTAIN THEIR NEUTRALITY.
Better Paranoid Than Sorry
OBJECTIFY MEN AS THE ENEMY
MAN-HATING DYKE
REAL WOMEN Don't Eat MEN
WOMEN! BITE THE HAND THAT FEEDS LEADS BLEEDS YOU
JUST SAY NO TO MEN
SO MANY MEN . . . SO LITTLE INTELLIGENCE
SO MANY MEN . . . SO LITTLE AMMUNITION
ANOTHER WOMAN FOR VIOLENCE AGAINST MEN
ANOTHER MAN FOR VIOLENCE AGAINST MEN
Dead Men Don't Rape
Dead Men Don't Use Pornography
Dead Men Don't Whine
DEAD MEN DON'T BOTHER ME
LEARN TO BURN
Pornography Doesn't Burn By Itself
It Needs Your Help
A.C.L.U.
ALWAYS CAUSING LEGAL UNREST

ACLU-02c - Website catalog, lower section.